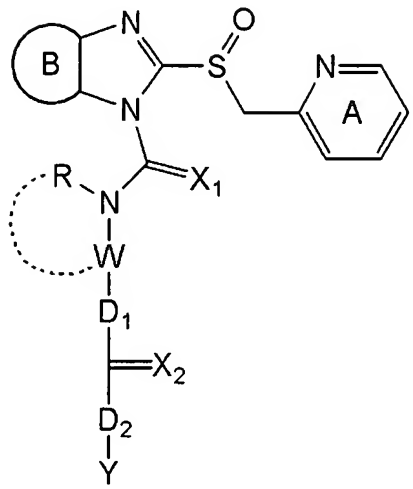
Amendments to the Claims

1. (Original) An imidazole compound represented by the formula (I):



(I)

wherein

ring A is a pyridine ring optionally having substituents,

ring B is a benzene ring optionally having substituents or a monocyclic aromatic heterocycle optionally having substituents,

X_1 and X_2 are each an oxygen atom or a sulfur atom,

W is a divalent chain hydrocarbon group optionally having substituents or a divalent group represented by the formula:

$$—W_1—Z—W_2—$$

wherein W_1 and W_2 are each a divalent chain hydrocarbon group or a bond, Z is a divalent hydrocarbon ring group optionally having substituents, a divalent heterocyclic group optionally having substituents, an oxygen atom, SO_n wherein n is 0, 1 or 2, or >N-E wherein E is a hydrogen atom, a hydrocarbon group

optionally having substituents, a heterocyclic group optionally having substituents, a lower alkanoyl group, a lower alkoxycarbonyl group, an aralkyloxycarbonyl group, a thiocarbamoyl group, a lower alkylsulfinyl group, a lower alkylsulfonyl group, a sulfamoyl group, a mono-lower alkylsulfamoyl group, a di-lower alkylsulfamoyl group, an arylsulfamoyl group, an arylsulfinyl group, an arylsulfonyl group, an arylcarbonyl group or a carbamoyl group optionally having substituents, and when Z is an oxygen atom, SO_n or >N-E, W_1 and W_2 are each a divalent chain hydrocarbon group,

R is a hydrocarbon group optionally having substituents or a heterocyclic group optionally having substituents,

R and W

may be bonded to each other,

D_1 and D_2

are each a bond, an oxygen atom, a sulfur atom or $>NR_1$ wherein R_1 is a hydrogen atom or a hydrocarbon group optionally having substituents, except for when D_1 and D_2 are each a bond, and

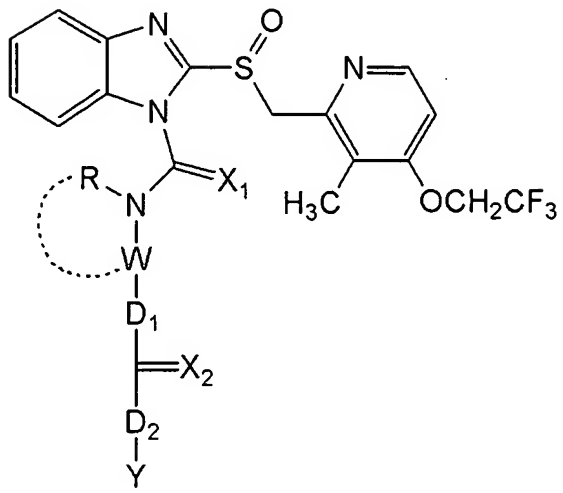
Y is a hydrocarbon group optionally having substituents or a heterocyclic group optionally having substituents,

or a salt thereof.

2. (Original) The compound of claim 1, wherein Z is a divalent hydrocarbon ring group optionally having substituents or a divalent heterocyclic group optionally having substituents.

3. (Original) The compound of claim 1, wherein ring B is a benzene ring optionally having substituents.

4. (Original) The compound of claim 1, which is represented by the formula (II):



(II)

wherein each symbol in the formula is as defined in claim 1.

5. (Currently amended) The compound of ~~any of claims 1 to 4~~ Claim 1, wherein X_1 and X_2 are each an oxygen atom.

6. (Original) The compound of claim 1, wherein D_1 and D_2 are each a bond or an oxygen atom, except for when D_1 and D_2 are each a bond.

7. (Original) The compound of claim 1, wherein W is a divalent chain hydrocarbon group optionally having substituents.

8. (Original) The compound of claim 1, wherein W is an ethylene group.

9. (Original) The compound of claim 1, wherein R is a C_{1-6} hydrocarbon group optionally having substituents.

10. (Original) The compound of claim 1, wherein Y is a C_{1-6} hydrocarbon group optionally

having substituents or a saturated heterocyclic group optionally having substituents, which contains, as ring-constituting atom, 1 to 4 heteroatom(s) selected from oxygen atom, nitrogen atom and sulfur atom.

11. (Original) The compound of claim 1, wherein X_1 and X_2 are each an oxygen atom, D_1 and D_2 are each a bond or an oxygen atom except for when D_1 and D_2 are both a bond, W is an ethylene group, R is a C_{1-6} alkyl group, and Y is a C_{1-6} hydrocarbon group optionally having substituents or a saturated oxygen-containing heterocyclic group optionally having substituents, which may further contain, as ring-constituting atom, 1 to 3 heteroatom(s) selected from oxygen atom, nitrogen atom and sulfur atom.

12. (Original) The compound of claim 1, which is a compound selected from
2-[methyl[[(R)-2-[[[3-methyl-4-(2,2,2-trifluoroethoxy)-2-pyridyl]methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl]amino]ethyl acetate,
ethyl 2-[methyl[[(R)-2-[[[3-methyl-4-(2,2,2-trifluoroethoxy)-2-pyridyl]methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl]amino]ethyl carbonate,
2-[methyl[[(R)-2-[[[3-methyl-4-(2,2,2-trifluoroethoxy)-2-pyridyl]methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl]amino]ethyl tetrahydropyran-4-yl carbonate,
2-[methyl[[2-[[[3-methyl-4-(2,2,2-trifluoroethoxy)-2-pyridyl]methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl]amino]ethyl tetrahydropyran-4-yl carbonate,
ethyl 2-[methyl[[2-[[[3-methyl-4-(2,2,2-trifluoroethoxy)-2-pyridyl]methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl]amino]ethyl carbonate,
ethyl 2-[[[5-methoxy-2-[[(4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridyl)methyl]sulfinyl]-3H-imidazo[4,5-b]pyridin-3-yl]carbonyl](methyl)amino]ethyl carbonate,
2-[[[5-methoxy-2-[[(4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridyl)methyl]sulfinyl]-3H-imidazo[4,5-b]pyridin-3-yl]carbonyl](methyl)amino]ethyl acetate,
2-[methyl[[2-[[[3-methyl-4-(2,2,2-trifluoroethoxy)-2-pyridyl]methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl]amino]ethyl acetate,

ethyl 2-[[[5-methoxy-2-[[(4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridyl)methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl](methyl)amino]ethyl carbonate,

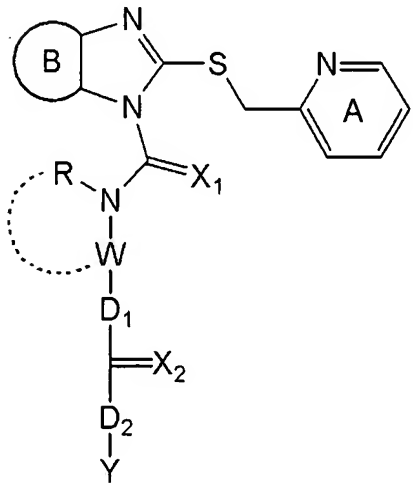
ethyl 2-[[[(S)-5-methoxy-2-[[(4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridyl)methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl](methyl)amino]ethyl carbonate,

ethyl 2-[[[2-[[[4-(3-methoxypropoxy)-3-methyl-2-pyridyl]methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl](methyl)amino]ethyl carbonate, and

2-[[[5-(difluoromethoxy)-2-[[(3,4-dimethoxy-2-pyridyl)methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl](methyl)amino]ethyl ethyl carbonate,

or a salt thereof.

13. (Original) A compound represented by the formula (V):



(V)

wherein

ring A is a pyridine ring optionally having substituents,

ring B is a benzene ring optionally having substituents or a monocyclic aromatic heterocycle optionally having substituents,

X_1 and X_2 are each an oxygen atom or a sulfur atom,

W is a divalent chain hydrocarbon group optionally having substituents or a divalent

group represented by the formula:

$$-W_1-Z-W_2-$$

wherein W_1 and W_2 are each a divalent chain hydrocarbon group or a bond, Z is a divalent hydrocarbon ring group optionally having substituents, a divalent heterocyclic group optionally having substituents, an oxygen atom, SO_n wherein n is 0, 1 or 2, or >N-E wherein E is a hydrogen atom, a hydrocarbon group optionally having substituents, a heterocyclic group optionally having substituents, a lower alkanoyl group, a lower alkoxycarbonyl group, an aralkyloxycarbonyl group, a thiocarbamoyl group, a lower alkylsulfinyl group, a lower alkylsulfonyl group, a sulfamoyl group, a mono-lower alkylsulfamoyl group, a di-lower alkylsulfamoyl group, an arylsulfamoyl group, an arylsulfinyl group, an arylsulfonyl group, an arylcarbonyl group or a carbamoyl group optionally having substituents, and when Z is an oxygen atom, SO_n or >N-E, W_1 and W_2 are each a divalent chain hydrocarbon group,

R is a hydrocarbon group optionally having substituents or a heterocyclic group optionally having substituents,

R and W may be bonded to each other,

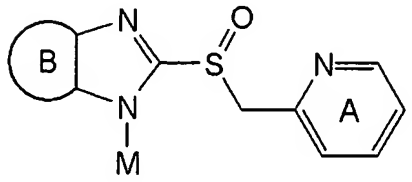
D_1 and D_2 are each a bond, an oxygen atom, a sulfur atom or $>NR_1$ wherein R_1 is a hydrogen atom or a hydrocarbon group optionally having substituents, except for when D_1 and D_2 are each a bond, and

Y is a hydrocarbon group optionally having substituents or a heterocyclic group optionally having substituents, or

a salt thereof.

14. A production method of a compound of claim 1 , which comprises

(1) condensing a compound represented by the formula (III):



(III)

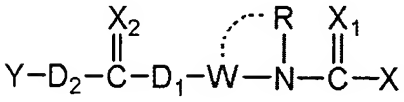
wherein

ring A is a pyridine ring optionally having substituents,

ring B is a benzene ring optionally having substituents or a monocyclic aromatic heterocycle optionally having substituents, and

M is a hydrogen atom, a metal cation or a quaternary ammonium ion,

or a salt thereof, with a compound represented by the formula (IV):



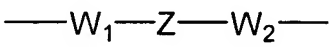
(IV)

wherein

X is a leaving group,

X_1 and X_2 are each an oxygen atom or a sulfur atom,

W is a divalent chain hydrocarbon group optionally having substituents, or a divalent group of the formula:



wherein W_1 and W_2 are each a divalent chain hydrocarbon group or a bond, Z is a

divalent hydrocarbon ring group optionally having substituents, a divalent heterocyclic group optionally having substituents, an oxygen atom, SO_n wherein n is 0, 1 or 2, or >N-E wherein E is a hydrogen atom, a hydrocarbon group optionally having substituents, a heterocyclic group optionally having substituents, a lower alkanoyl group, a lower alkoxycarbonyl group, an aralkyloxycarbonyl group, a thiocarbamoyl group, a lower alkylsulfinyl group, a lower alkylsulfonyl group, a sulfamoyl group, a mono-lower alkylsulfamoyl group, a di-lower alkylsulfamoyl group, an arylsulfamoyl group, an arylsulfinyl group, an arylsulfonyl group, an arylcarbonyl group or a carbamoyl group optionally having substituents, and when Z is an oxygen atom, SO_n or >N-E, W_1 and W_2 are each a divalent chain hydrocarbon group,

R is a hydrocarbon group optionally having substituents or a heterocyclic group optionally having substituents,

R and W

may be bonded to each other,

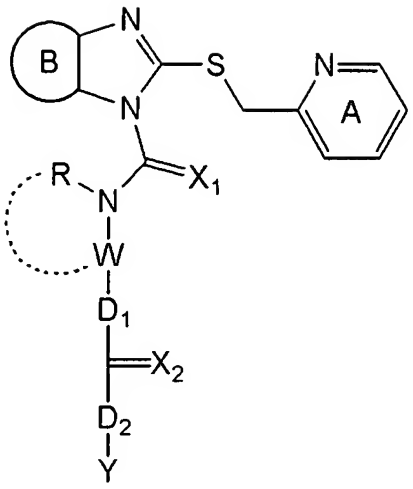
D_1 and D_2

are each a bond, an oxygen atom, a sulfur atom, or $>NR_1$ wherein R_1 is a hydrogen atom or a hydrocarbon group optionally having substituents, except for when D_1 and D_2 are each a bond, and

Y is a hydrocarbon group optionally having substituents or a heterocyclic group optionally having substituents, or

a salt thereof, or

(2) subjecting a compound represented by the formula (V):



(V)

wherein each symbol in the formula is as defined above, or a salt thereof, to an oxidization reaction.

15. (Currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of claim 1 together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

16. (Original) The pharmaceutical composition of claim 15, which is an agent for the prophylaxis or treatment of peptic ulcer, gastritis, peptic esophagitis, symptomatic gastroesophageal reflux disease (symptomatic GERD) free of esophagitis, NUD, gastric cancer, gastric MALT lymphoma, Zollinger-Ellison syndrome, acid indigestion or upper gastrointestinal hemorrhage.

17. (Original) A commercial package comprising a pharmaceutical composition of claim 16 and written matter associated therewith, the written matter stating that the pharmaceutical composition can or should be used for the prophylaxis or treatment of peptic ulcer, gastritis, peptic esophagitis, symptomatic gastroesophageal reflux disease (symptomatic GERD) free of esophagitis, NUD, gastric cancer, gastric MALT lymphoma, Zollinger-Ellison syndrome, acid indigestion or upper gastrointestinal hemorrhage.

18. (Original) The pharmaceutical composition of claim 15, which is an agent for the eradication of *Helicobacter pylori*.

19. (Original) A commercial package comprising a pharmaceutical composition of claim 18 and written matter associated therewith, the written matter stating that the pharmaceutical composition can or should be used for the eradication of *Helicobacter pylori*.

20. (Original) A method for the prophylaxis or treatment of peptic ulcer, gastritis, peptic esophagitis, symptomatic gastroesophageal reflux disease (symptomatic GERD) free of esophagitis, NUD, gastric cancer, gastric MALT lymphoma, Zollinger-Ellison syndrome, acid indigestion or upper gastrointestinal hemorrhage in an animal, which comprises administering an effective amount of a compound of claim 1 to the animal.

21. (Original) A method for eradicating *Helicobacter pylori* from an animal infected with *Helicobacter pylori*, which comprises administering an effective amount of a compound of claim 1 to the animal.

22. (Currently amended) ~~Use of a compound of claim 1~~ A method for the production of a prophylactic or therapeutic agent of peptic ulcer, gastritis, peptic esophagitis, symptomatic gastroesophageal reflux disease (symptomatic GERD) free of esophagitis, NUD, gastric cancer, gastric MALT lymphoma, Zollinger-Ellison syndrome, acid indigestion or upper gastrointestinal hemorrhage, which comprises mixing the compound of claim 1 with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

23. (Currently amended) ~~Use of a compound of claim 1~~ A method for the production of an agent for eradicating *Helicobacter pylori*, which comprises mixing the compound of claim 1 with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

24. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A pharmaceutical composition ~~of claim 15, further~~ comprising at least one antibacterial agent in combination with the compound of claim 1, wherein active components are formulated altogether in a fixed formulation, or formulated independently for concurrent administration or administration at staggered times to a single subject.